1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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843 such as, in other parts of India, of the use of a knife or the cutting of anything; but ordinary enquiry elicited no clue to them.

844 It was said on page 106 that children are born in the menstruation hut or room. This is certainly the case so far as the private huts and rooms are concerned; but in my notes it is not clear whether births ever take place in the communal menstruation hut. They probably do not, because obviously it may be needed at any time for other women of the village, and I have notes of children in Hikpulla and Nugur, where there are communal menstruation huts, being born in a corner of the veranda of the house specially walled off for the purpose.

[777] Cases are known of a mother being delivered of a child in the fields or the forest, but this is considered very unlucky, and as soon as the mother knows that her hour is upon her, she must make every effort to get in time to the menstruation hut or room. During delivery she may have the comfort of the presence of her mother-in-law or some woman from the village; but there are no midwives, and the woman with her must not touch her or assist the delivery; the mother is expected to do everything for herself, and it is regarded as very wrong if she is unable to do so. They pray to the clan-god during a difficult delivery, but appear to do nothing else to assist the mother by either medicine or ceremony. The mother herself has to cut the navel-cord of her baby either with her husband's ordinary knife or with an arrow-head. She cuts it about three or four inches from its junction with the stomach, and binds it close to the junction with a ligature of cord, the portion between the cut and the ligature being left to dry and fall off; and she is expected to bury the placenta (*modi*) immediately after this under the house rubbish-heap outside the back of the house. If the child is born dead, the mother has to bury it somewhere in the forest, going there alone and digging the grave without assistance; it may not be buried in the regular village graveyard. Around Handawada a mother is expected to stay in the menstruation room for a full month after delivery; but the general rule in the interior of the Abujhmar hills is for her to remain there for eight days or until the navel-cord dries and falls off.

[845 766]

846 Everywhere it is taboo for the father to do any field or other work during this period of eight days before the navel-cord falls. No medicine is given to him. He must not sleep in the house during the period in most parts of the hills, but in the dormitory; around Handawada he sleeps in the portion of the *kala* room separated from the woman's portion by the *binda* mud threshold. He must not cook his own food during this period, and has to get a man friend to cook food for him in another house and bring it to

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Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bimsul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

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844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut, should the water
[787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, 'for this tree does every kind of work for us'. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restric-
852 tions on her and when she feels ready—'when her body is dry and clean'—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house,
852 there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda.
553 The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

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is a vague idea that monozygotic twins are more likely to be fortunate than dizygotic. Thus when Tati Buta's wife gave birth to female twins at Palnar, it was observed that they had but one placenta and the people declared them to be lucky and expected them to survive—which they did. But at Phulpar, where Sodi Mandra's wife gave birth to dizygotic twins, a boy and a girl, both died within a fortnight, and at Bara Harmamunda, where Oyami Kama's wife had male twins of the same order, both parents and the children died soon afterwards. 845

The Marias believe that the cause of such births may be physical, magical or supernatural. When Gangu of Koriras had male twins it was believed to have been due to her eating off a leaf-plate made of double leaves. It was the indiscretion of eating a double cob of maize that gave Oyami Kama's wife her twins. The Marias, therefore, are generally careful not to pick double leaves or fruit—double plantains, ebony fruit, maize and so on. Even a husband should be careful about this. For even though twins are not specially unlucky nobody wants them, and it is hard for the mother to nourish two children properly. If a young girl has twins, it is generally assumed that she has been lying with more than one man. At Gogonda a woman had intercourse both with her husband and a lover on the day of her post-menstrual bath. The result was twins and such grievous offence to the Departed that they killed both children within a few weeks.

The Marias also believe that twins may be the result of intercourse with a supernatural being. At Gudra I was told how Hunga Nupo's wife was visited by a Rau: 'He laughed and went to her. The next day her husband lay with her and in due time she gave birth to twins.' A similar story is told of the wife of Sodi Mandra.

Maria twins, like twins all over India, are named after the inseparable couple Rama and Lakshman. Two boys are Rama and Lakha, two girls Rame and Lakhe. The after-birth, whether double or single, of both children is buried in one pit and only one arrow is put above it. In the same way the twins are supposed to remain very close to each other throughout their lives. 845 553

VI

Grigson was unable to find any trace of the dormitory among the Bison-horn Marias; the people always denied that they existed, and even said that they were a degraded institution. Grigson was rightly suspicious of these denials, for in fact a simple form of dormitory exists in most of the bigger Bison-horn Maria villages. Even to-day the headmen deny their existence—I have never 883

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

[524] *Chipta upre jai phar,* There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna bābu kai phar? How can you know what fruit it is?

● 845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jānwar jiya* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky.

[777] Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The [redacted] were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

[777] A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tilli-janamta* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *kera bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'.

II. Name-giving

559 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *sur-pador* or original name.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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539 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding some-
773 where and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mallawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. [245] The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular
937 methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike